



Forest Health Protection

Pacific Southwest Region



Date: 2017
File Code: 3400

To: Patricia Grantham, Supervisor Klamath National Forest

Subject: Harlan Project, Goosenest Ranger District

At the request of Mike Reed, Silviculturist, a site visit was made to the Harlan Project site on May 23, 2017, where there is a proposal to treat approximately 19,000 acres within the 22,925 acre project boundary. The objectives were to assess the current stand conditions for insect and disease activity and discuss suitability for WBBI funding. In attendance were Cynthia Snyder, Pete Angwin (Forest Health Protection), Roger Siemers, Mike Reed, Karl Dietzler, Nate Parks, Brian Sullivan, Eri Iwao, Anthony Setra, Joe Leonard, Jamie Kolesar, Ray Riecon, Holly Avery, and Matt Avery (Klamath NF).

Background

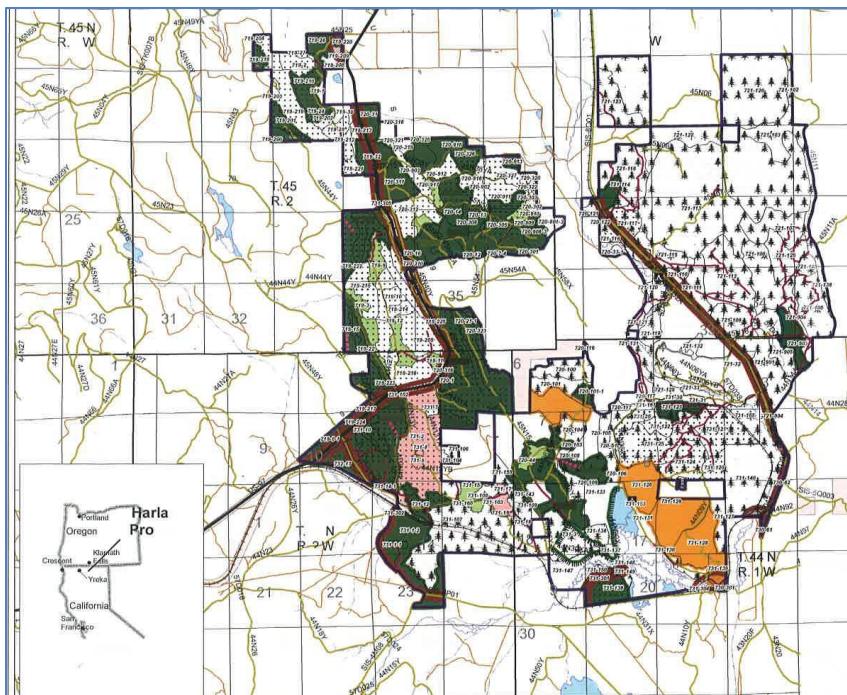


Figure 1. Map of Harlan Project boundary.

The Harlan Project is located in the Horsethief Creek, Lough Lake, Lower Butte Creek, Prather Creek, and Upper Butte Creek watersheds in the Goosenest Ranger District, Klamath National Forest approximately 8 miles south of Macdoel, CA (Siskiyou County): Township 44 North, Range 1 West, sect. 2-10, 15-21; Township 45 North,

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Range 1 West, sect. 15, 17, 20-23, 26-30, 32-35; Township 44 North, Range 2 West, sect. 1-3, 10-14, 23; Township 45 North, Range 2 West, sect. 8-9, 15-16, 22-27, 34-35, Mount Diablo Meridian (Figure 1). Project elevation ranges between 4,200 and 5,300 feet.

The project area has many designated management areas that are described in the Klamath National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan (1995) including winter range, riparian reserves, forage, general forest, Goosenest Adaptive Management Area, special habitat, and retention visual quality objective designations.

The majority of the ponderosa pine stands in the project area were railroad-logged during the 1920's and 1930's removing nearly all mature, large diameter pine species from the area. Many of these stands have been thinned one or more times since. The last thinning treatment of these stands occurred approximately 25 years ago. At that time, some areas that had not naturally reforested after railroad-logging were planted to ponderosa pine. In addition, fire exclusion has led to increased fuel loading as well as juniper and white fir encroachment under the pine overstory.

Observations

We visited stand 720-12 where there was evidence of tree mortality due to western pine beetle in the ponderosa pine and fir engraver beetle in the white fir. Insect populations remain active in this stand and others according to Mike Reed. Basal area was high in clumps some 150-200 sqft/ac but less dense with open patches between the heaviest clumps (Figure 2).



Figure 2. Clumpy distribution of ponderosa pine and white fir in the harlan Project.

Discussion

The Harlan Project was introduced to FHP as a possible WBBI project beyond FY2018. The project is still being proposed for scoping and NEPA has not been completed. The area is at risk of continued western pine beetle-caused mortality in ponderosa pine due primarily to overstocking. As with most bark beetles, the most economical and efficient means of management is to maintain trees and stands in a healthy condition. Stocking reduction and creation of diverse stand conditions reduce overall susceptibility to western pine beetle. Thinning was discussed and it was suggested that treatment should bring the SDI down to a level where it would remain below 200 for a minimum of 20 years to meet the Region requirement of no less than 20 year re-entry for thinning. The proposed treatment for the stand we visited included thinning to a basal area of about 60 sqft/ac with preference for ponderosa pine over the encroaching white fir. The low BA is being suggested as a buffer to the effects of climate change and the expected increase in temperatures and more frequent droughts. A second visit after NEPA is completed will be made to visit more stands and

If you have any questions regarding this report and/or need additional information, please contact Cynthia Snyder at 530-226-2437 or Pete Angwin at 530-226-2436.

/s/ Cynthia Snyder

CC: Roger Siemers, Mike Reed, Bryan Sullivan, James Kolesar, Matt Avery, Chris Losi, Sheri Smith, Phil Cannon, Chris Fischer, Sherry Hazlehurst, and Pete Angwin